



Mentoring case studies

Case study 1 – Level 1 candidate

Marie has a son who has recently started playing lacrosse (a sport which Marie knows very little about). She has been asked to coach one of the teams in the club and has decided to do a Level 1 coaching course to learn more about coaching lacrosse. Marie attends a two-day course and is assigned a mentor (Patrick), from a club near by, to work with over the coming months. Marie is provided with a workbook that she and her mentor will use to guide their discussions and her learning.

Other Level 1 candidates have also been assigned to Patrick, who is a more experienced Level 1 coach. Patrick arranges to meet with the coaches he is mentoring once a week, for the next two months. At their first get together they discuss the workbook and how they plan to work through it as a group. They also talk about what they hope to learn from one another and what they believe their strengths and weaknesses are.

Over the next few months, Marie and the rest of the group meet regularly to observe, analyse and discuss Patrick's coaching. They also spend a lot of time with Patrick discussing game play, tactics and team building. Marie and her colleagues learn to analyse their own coaching and use their workbooks to help them reflect on their own coaching performance and how they can improve it.

The group go out for dinner at the end of the two-month period to celebrate everyone's achievements. At the dinner, Patrick comments on how useful he found the mentoring process and how it also made him reflect upon his own coaching and improve it. Marie has continued to stay in contact with the group and once every season they still get together (over some wine and cheese) to discuss a topical coaching issue.

Case study 2 – Coaching practice for Level 1 candidate

Stephen is a new gymnastics coach who has recently completed a Level 1 course with his local gymnastics club. In order to complete his Level 1 accreditation he is required to do 15 hours of coaching practice under the supervision of a mentor coach. He has asked Patti, a Level 2 coach from his club, to be his mentor.

Patti comes to Stephen's training sessions once a fortnight for several months to supervise 10 hours of the required 40 hours of coaching practice. At these sessions, Patti looks at Stephen's lesson plans with him prior to the session so she is clear on his objectives and plans. She then observes Stephen coaching and spends 5–10 minutes after the session talking with Stephen about how he thought the session went and what he might improve upon. They also talk about how he might plan his next session.

After three months, Patti provides a written evaluation of Stephen's lesson plans and coaching on a checklist provided by the Gymnastics Federation. She talks with Stephen about her evaluation before he sends it off (with his assignments and lesson plans) to his course coordinator. On receipt of the evaluation form and other materials, the course coordinator checks that Stephen has met all the requirements for Level 1 and finalises his accreditation. Over the ensuing months, Patti and Stephen continue to discuss coaching issues on occasion and Stephen invites Patti to help him choreograph some of his athlete's floor routines.

Case study 3 – Professional development for referee

Ron is a basketball referee with his local association. He referees in the local under 18 women's competition. He has refereed for six years, and is a qualified referee after doing a course five years ago. He attends briefing sessions run by the association a couple of times a season, where the chief referee discusses rule changes and interpretations and all of the association's referees can ask questions and discuss issues.



Ron always tries to speak with the coaches after his games to get some feedback on his refereeing, but he often gets conflicting feedback from the coaches. He is starting to become frustrated, and decides to ask Chris (another referee from his zone) to come and watch some of the games he referees and give him some feedback. Chris suggests they have a chat before she watches a game so she can be clear on what Ron is hoping to achieve.

Ron decides he wants Chris to focus her observations and feedback on how he interacts with the coaches and players as they often argue with him after he has made a controversial decision. Ron feels he gets flustered in these situations and it then affects how he referees the rest of the game. Chris watches half a dozen of Ron's games and together they discuss some strategies that Ron can use 'in the heat of the moment' to better handle his interactions with coaches and players.

Ron is happy with the improvements he has made and does not ask Chris to watch any more games. Through the mentoring process, Chris has recognised that Ron is a very good technical referee with excellent knowledge of the rules. A few months later Chris asks Ron to come and watch her referee a senior men's game to give her some feedback on her interpretation of the offensive foul rules.

Case study 4 – 'Fast tracking' for athlete completing Level 1

Klaus is an elite dressage rider who has competed internationally for Australia. He is often asked for coaching advice by other riders and decides that he should undertake his Level 1 accreditation. He approaches his state equestrian federation to get some recognition of his experience, so he doesn't have to complete parts of the course in which he feels he is already competent.

The state federation assigns him to work with Simone, an experienced Level 3 coach and a coach educator. Klaus and Simone meet once a week for six months to work through the Level 1 curriculum and identify which parts of the curriculum Klaus is already competent in and they continue to work on the other parts where Klaus does not yet have enough experience. Sometimes when they meet they do a 'theory session' together, where they discuss coaching principles and riding theory, other times Klaus might observe Simone coaching or Simone might observe Klaus coaching.

Simone occasionally assists Klaus in a lesson where he needs help, or where a rider is having difficulty achieving the task that Klaus has set for them. After these practical sessions they always have a 'de-brief' for 15 minutes to discuss what Klaus has learnt and how it relates to the curriculum.

Once a month they spend 30 minutes or so checking Klaus' progress toward his Level 1 qualification, and plan what they will focus on in the next few weeks. At the end of the six months, Simone and Klaus believe that he is ready to be assessed and after completing his theoretical and practical assessment tasks he achieves his Level 1 accreditation. Klaus now helps Simone to run coaching clinics throughout the region and often coaches clients at her riding school.